

THE DEFENCE OF Conny catching.

OR

A CONFUTATION OF THOSE
two invidious Pamphlets published by R.G. against
the practitioners of many Nimble-witted
and mysticall Sciences.

By Cuthbert Cunny-catcher, Licenciate in Whis-
tington Colledge.

*Qui bene latuit bene vixit, dominatur enim
frons in omnibus.*



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THE DEFENCE OF
CONY CRYING

A CONTINUATION OF THOSE

the Proceedings of the Court of Sessions
and the High Court of Justice

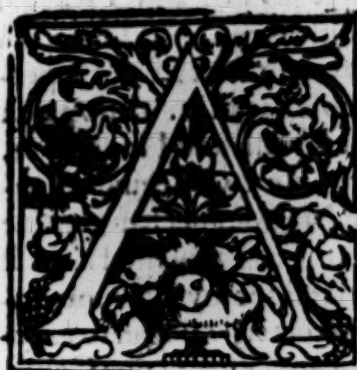
By Charles Cony, Esq. Barrister at Law
in the High Court of Justice

Printed by J. Smith, at the Press of the
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To all my good frends
health.



AS *Plato* (my good friendes) trauelled from Athens to Aegypt, and from thence through sundry clymes to increase his knowledge: so I as desirous as hee to search the deapth of those liberall Artes whercin I was a professour, lefte my studie in *Whittington Colledge*, & trauced the country to grow famous in my facultie, so that I was so expert in the *Art of Cony-catching* by my continuall practise, that that learned Philosopher *Iacke Cuttes*, whose deepe insight into this science had drawn him thrise through euery gaole in England, meeting of mee at *Maidstone*, gaue mee the bucklers, as the subtlest that euer he sawe in that quaint and mysticall forme of Foolosophie: for if euer I brought my Conny but to crush a pottle of ale with mee, I was as sure of all the crownes in his purse, as if hee had conueyed them into my proper possession by a deede of gifte with his owne hande.

At *Dequoy*, *Mumchaunce*, *Catch-dolt*, *Oure le bourse*, *Non est possiblr*, *Dutch Noddie*, or *Irish one and thirtie*, none durst euer make compare with me for excellence: but as so many heades so many wits, so some that would

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Newgate
builded by
one Wit-
tington

The names
offurthe
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Conny
chers vnto

To the Readers

Al the mo-
nie in their
purse.

not stoope a farthing at cardes, would venter all the
byre in their boung at dice. Therefore had I cheates for
the very sife, of the squariers, langrets, gourds, stoppe-
dice, high-men, low-men, and dice barde for all ad-
uantages: that if I fetcht in anie nouyce eyther at ta-
bles, or anie other game of hazard, I would bee sure
to strippe him of all that his purse had in Esse, or his
credyt in Posse, ere the simple Connie and I parted.

When neyther of these would serue, I had consorts
that could verse, nippe, and foyst, so that I had a super-
ficiall sight into euery profitable facultie. Insomuch
that my principles grew authentically, and I so famous,
that had I not bene crost by those two peruisish Pam-
phlets, I might at the nexte Midsummer haue worne
Doctor *Storres* cappe for a fauor. For I trauelled almost
throughout all England, admired for my ingenious ca-
pacitie: till comming about Excester, I began to exer-
cise my art, and drawing in a Tanner for a tame Conie,
alsoone as he had lost two shillings he made this replie.

Some Co-
nicatchers
dare weare
noblemens
liueryes, as
W. Bicker-
ton and o-
thers.

Sirha, although you haue a livery on your backe, and a
cognisance to countenance you withall, and beare the
port of a Gentleman, yet I see you are a false knaue and
a Conny-catcher, and this your companion your setter,
and that before you and I part Ile proue.

At these wordes Conny-catcher and Setter, I was
driven into as great a maze, as if one had dropt out of
the clouds, to heare a pesant cant the wordes of art be-
lōging to our trade: yet I set a good face on the matter
and asked him what he ment by Cony-catching. Marry
(q.he) although it is your practise, yet I haue for 3. pence
bought a litle Pamphlet, that hath taught me to smoke
such a couple of knaues as you be. When I heard him
talke of smoaking, my heart waxed cold, and I began to
gather into him gently. No no sir (q.he) you cānot verse
vpon me, this booke hath taught me to beware of crof-
buing:

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biting: And so to be breefe he vsed me curteously, and that night cauld the Constable to lodge mee in prison, & the nexte morning I was carried before the Iustice, where likewise he had this cursed booke of Conycatching, so that hee could tel the secretes of mine art better then my selfe: whereupon after strict examination I was sent to the gaole, & at the Sessions by good hap & some friend that my money procured mee, I was deliuered. As loone as I was at liberty, I got one of these bookes, & began to rosse it ouer very devoutly, wherin I found one art so perfectly anotomized, as if he had bene practitioner in our facultie forty winters before: then with a deepe sigh I began to curse this *R. G.* that had made a publike spoyle of so noble a science, and to exclaime against that palpable asse whosoever, that would nake any pen-man priuy to our secret sciences. But see the sequel, I sinoothered my sorrowe in silence, and away I trudged out of Deuonshire, & went towards Cornwall, & comming to a simple Ale-house to lodge, I found at a square table hard by the fire halfe a doozen countrie Farmers at cardes. The sight of these penny-fathers at play, draue me straight into a pleasant p. ssion, to blesse fortune that had offred such sweet opportunity to exercise my wits, & fil my purse with crowns: for I couëted all the mony they had, mine by proper interest. As thus I stood looking on them playing at crof-ruffe, one was taken reuoking, whereat the other said; what neighbour wil you play the cony-catcher with vs? no no, wee haue read the booke as wel as you. Neuer went a cup of small beare so sorowfully down an Ale-knights belly in a frosty-morning, as that word stroke to my hart, so that for feare of trouble I was fain to try my good hap at square play, at which fortune fauoring mee. I wan twenty shillings, and yet doe as simply as I could, I was not one he suspected, but called Conny-catcher and crosse-biter.

But

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But away I went with the money, and came presently to London, where I no sooner arrived amongst the crue, but I heard of a second parte worse then the first, which draue mee into such a great choller, that I began to enquire what this R. G. should bee. At last I learned that hee was a scholler, and a Maister of Artes, and a Conny-catcher in his kinde, though not at cards, and one that fauoured good fellowes, so they were not palpable offenders in such desperate lawes: wherevpon reading his bookes, and surueying euery line with deepe iudgement, I began to note folly in the man, that would straine a Gnat, and lette passe an Elephant: that would touch small scapes, and lette grosse faultes passe without any reprehension. Insomuch that I resolved to make an Apologie, and to aunswere his libellous inuestiues, and to proue that we Conny-catchers are like little flies in the grasse, which liue: or little leaues and doe no more harme: whereas there bee in Englande other professions that bee great Conny-catchers and caterpillers, that make barraine the field wherein they baite.

Therefore all my good friends vouch of my paines, and pray for my proceedings, for I meane to haue about with this R. G. and to giue him such a veny, that he shal be afraid heereafter to disparage that mysticall science of Conny-catching: if not, and that I proue too weake for him in sophistrie, I meane to borrowe *Will Bickertons* blade, of as good a temper as *Moglay King Arthures* sword was, and so challenge him to the single combat: But desirous to ende the quarrell with the penne if it be possible, heare what I haue learned in *Whittington Colledge*,

Yours in cardes and dice
Cuthbert cony-catcher.

The



THE DEFENCE OF Conny-catching.



Cannot but wonder maister R. G. what Poeticall fury made you so fantasticke, to wryte against Conny-catchers? Was your braine so barraine that you had no other subiect: or your wittes so dried with dreawing of loue Pamphlettes, that you had no other humour left, but satirically with Diogenes, to snarle at all mens manners? You neuer founde in Tully nor Aristotle, what a letter or a verser was.

It had been the part of a Scholler, to haue writen seriously of some graue subiect, either Philosophically to haue shewen how you were proficient in Cambridge, or diuinely to haue manifested your religion to the world. Such triuall trinkets and chreedbare trash, had better seemed T. D. whose braines beaten to the yarking vp of Ballades, might more lawfully haue glaunst at the quaint conceites of conny-catching and crosse-buie.

But to this my obiection, mee thinkes I heare your masship learnedly reply, *Nascimur pro patria*: Euery man is not boine for himselfe, but for his countrie: and that the ende of all studious in deuours ought to tende to the aduancing of vertue, or suppressing of vice in the common-wealth. So that you haue heren done the part of a good subiect, and a good scholler, to anotomize such secret villanies as are practised by cosoning companions, to the ouerthrow of the simple people: for by the discouery of such pernicious lawes, you seeke to roote out of the common-wealth, such ill and licentious liuing persons, as do *Ex alieno succo viuere*, liue of the sweat of other mens browes, and vnder subtil shifces of witte abused, seeke to ruine the flourishing estate of Englande. These you call vipers, moathes of the common-wealth, caterpillers worse then God rayned downe on Egypt, rotten flesh which

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must be diuided from the whole.

Ense refecandam est ne pars sincera trahatur.

This maister R. G. I know will be your answer, as it is the pretended cause of your iniurious Pamphlets. And indeede it is very well done, but greater had your praise been, if you had entered into the nature of more grosse abuses, and set downe the particular enormities that growe from such palpable villanies. For truly it is, that this is the Iron age, wherem iniquitie hath the upper hande, and all conditions and estates of men seeke to liue by their wittes, and he is counted wisest, that hath the deepest insight into the getting of games: euery thing now that is found profitable, is counted honest and lawfull: and men are valued by their wealth, not by their vertues. Hee that cannot dissemble cannot liue, and men put their sonnes now a dayes Apprentises, not to learne trades and occupations, but craftes and mysteries.

If then witte in this age be counted a great patrimony, and subtiltie an inseparable accident to all estates, why should you bee so spitefull maister R. G. to pooze Conny-catchers aboue all the rest, sith they are the simplest soules of all in wishing to liue in this our wile world?

But you play like the Spider that makes her webbe to incrap and snare little Flies, but weaues it so slenderly, that the great ones breake through without any damage. You straine Gnats, and passe ouer Elephants: you scoure the ponde of a fewe croaking Frogges, and leaue behinde an infinite number of most venomous Scorpions. You decypher pooze Conny-catchers, that perhaps with a trick at cardes, winne fortye shillings from a churle that can spare it, and neuer talke of those Caterpillers that vndoe the pooze, rume whole Lordships, infect the common-wealth, and delight in nothing but in wrongfull extorting and purloining of peltie, when as such be the greatest Conny-catchers of all, as by your leaue maister R. G. I wil make manifest.

Sir reuerence on your worship, had you such a moate in your eye, that you could not see those Fox-hunt Gentlemen that hyde vnder their gownes faced with foynes, more falshood then all the Conny-catchers in England beside, those miserable Usurers (I meane) that like Vultures pray vpon the spoyle of the poore, sleeping

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sleeping with his neighbors pledges all night in his bosome, and feeding upon forfeits and penalties, as the ravenous doe vpon carrion: If his poore neighbor want to supply his need, either for his household necessities, or his rent at the day, he will not lende a penny for charitie, all his money is abroad: but if he offer him either corn or tow, mare or horse, or the very coine scarce sowed out of the ground to sel, so the bargain may be cheape, though to the begger of the poore man, hee choppes with him straight, and makes the poore Conny fare the worse all the yeare after. Why write you not of these Connycatchers Maister R. G.?

Besides if pawnes come, as the lease of a house, or the fee simple in mortgage, hee can out of his surd callocke draw money to lend: but the olde Cole hath such quirkes and quiddities in the conueyance, such prouisoos, such dayes, howers, nay minutes of payments, that if his neighbor breake but a moment, he takes the forfeit, and like a pinke-eyed Ferret so clawes the poore Conny in the burrow, that he leaues no haire on his breach nor on his backe ere he partes with him. Are not these vipers of the commonweleth; and to be exclaunde against, not in smal Pamphlets, but in great volumes?

You set downe how there bee requisite Setters and Uersers in Conny-catching, and be there not so I pray you in Usury: for when a young youthful Gentleman, giuen a little to lash out his liberality, wanteth money, makes hee not his moane first to the Broker, as subtil a knaue to induce him to his ouertthrowe, as the wyldest Setter or Uerser in Englande; and he must be feede to speake to the Usurer, and haue so much in the pound for his labour: then he shal haue graunt of money and commodities together, so that if he borrow a hundred pound, he shal haue forty in siluer, and threescore in wares, deare as God wot: as Lute strings, Hobby horses, or (if he be greatly fauored) browne paper or cloath, and that shootes out in the last. Then his lande is turnde ouer in statute of recognizance for sixe moneths and sixe moneths, so that he payes some thirty in the hundred to the Usurer, beside the Scriveners he hath a blind share: but when he comes to sel his threescore pound commodities, tis wel if he get fine and thirtie.

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Thus is the poore gentleman made a meere and simple Conny, and verie vpon to the better most, and yet if he breake his day, loseth as much land as cost his father a thousand markes.

Is not this coosenage and Conny-catching Master R. G. and moze daily practised in England, and moze hurtful then our poore shifting at Cardes, and yet your masshippe can wike at the cause: they be wealthy, but Cuthbert Conny-catcher cares for none of them no moze then they care for him, and therfore wil reueale all. And because Master R. G. you were pleasant in examples, He tel you a tale of an Usurer, done within a mile of a knaues head, and since the Cuckow sung last, and it fell out thus.

A pleasant tale of an Usurer.

If I fortun'd that a yong gentleman not farre off from Cocker-mouth, was somewhat sl. pt behind hand, and growne in debt, so that he durst hardly shew his head for feare of his creditors, and having wife and children to maintaine, although he had a proper land, yet wanting money to stocke his ground, he liued very bare: wherupon he determined with himselfe to goe to an olde penny-father that dwelt hard by him, and to borrow some money of him, and so to lay his land in mortgage for the repayment of it.

He no sooner made the motion but it was accepted, for it was a goodly Lordship, worth in rent of assise seven score pound by the yeare, and did abut vpon the Usurers ground, which drew the olde churle to be maruellous willing to disburse money, so that he was content to lende him two hundred markes for thye peare according to the statute, so that he might haue the land for assurance of his money.

The gentleman agreed to that, and promised to acknowledge a statute Staple to him, with letters of deseylance. The Usurer (although he like this wel, and saw the yong man offered more than reason required) yet had a further seach to haue the land his what-soeuer should chaunce, and therefore he began to verse vpon the poore Conny thus.

Sir (quoth he) if I did not pittie your estate, I would not lende you my money at such a rate: for whereas you haue it after ten pounds

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pounds in the hundred. I can make it worth thirtie. But seeing the distresse you your wife and children are in, and considering all growes through your owne liberrall nature, I compassionate you the more, and would do for you as for mine owne sonne: therefore if you shal thinke good to follow it, I wil giue you fatherly aduise. I knowe you are greatly indebted, and haue many vnnmercifull creditors, and they haue you in line, and I doubt ere long wil haue some extent against your lands, so shal you be vetterly undone, and I greatly incumbered. Therefore to auoyd all this, in my iudgement it were best for you to make a deed of gift of all your landes, without condition or promise, to some one faythful friend or other, in whom you may repose credite, so shal your enemies haue no aduantage against you: and seeing they shall haue nothing but your bare body lpayable to their executions, they wil take the more easie and speedy composition. I thinke this the surest way, and if you durst repose your selfe in me, God is my witnesse, I would be to you as your father if he liued. Now say you to this compendious tale Maister R. C. could the proudest setter or verser in the world haue drawne on a Conny more cunningly?

Wel, againe to our yong gentleman, who simply (with teares in his eyes to heare the kindnes of the Usurer) thank him hartly, and deferred not to put in practise his counsell, for he made an absolute deed of gift from wife and children to this Usurer of all his Lordshippe, and so had the two hundred markes vpon the playne forfait of a band.

To be shor, the money made him and his merry, and yet he did but so and it so wel, that he not onely duly paid the interest, but stocke his grounds, and began to grow out of debt, so that his creditors were willing to beare with him. Against the three yeares were expired, he made shift by the helpe of his friends for the money, and carryed it home to the Usurer, thanking him greatly, and crauing a returne of his deed of gift. Nay soft sir (sayth the olde Churle) that bargaine is yet to make, the land is mine to mee and mine heires for euer, by a deed of gift from your owne hand, and what can be more sure: take the money if you please, and there is your band, but for the Lordship I wil enter on it to morrow: yet if you wil be my tenant, you shall haue it before another, and that is all

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the fauour you shal haue of me.

At this the Gentleman was amazed, and began to plead conscience with him, but in vaine: whereupon he went sorrowfully home and told his wife, who as a woman halfe lunatique ran with his little childzen to his house, and cryed out, bre boordle: For although they called him before the chiefe of the country, yet such the law had graunted him the fee simple ther: of he would not part withal: so that this distressed gentleman was faine to become tenant to this Usurer, and for two hundred marks to lose a Lordship worth six or seuen thousand pounds. I pray you was not this an old Conycatcher H. R. G. that could lurch a poore Cony of so many thousands at one time? whether is our crosling at cardes moze perillous to the commonwelth than this cosenage for land: you winke at it, but I wil tel all, yet heare out the end of my tale, for as fortune fel out, the Usurer was made a Cony himselfe.

The gentleman and his wife smothering this with patience, she that had a reaching wit, & halfe pain reuenge in his head, counselled his husband to make a voyage from home, & to stay a weeke or two: and (q. she) before you come againe you shal see mee venter faire for the land. The gentleman willing to let his wife practise his wits, went his way, and left al to his wifes discretion. She after his husband was foure or fife dayes from home, was visited by the Usurer, who vsed her very kindly, and sent victuals to his house, promising to sup with her that night, and that she should not want any thing in his husbands absence. The gentlewoman with gracious acceptance thank him, and had diuers of her neighbors to beare him company, hauing a further reach in his head then he suspected. For the olde Churle comming an hower before Supper time, euen as she his selfe would wish, after an amorous weeke or two, as olde Iades wyntie when they cannot wagge the tayle, began to be very pleasant with his tenant, and desired her to shew him al the roomes in his house, and happily (saith he) If I die without issue, I may giue it to your childzen, for my conscience bids me be fauorable to you.

The gentlewoman lead him through euery part, and at last brought him into a backe roome much like a backhouse, where she said thus vnto him.

Str,

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Sir, this roome is the most vnhandsomest in all the house, but if there were a doymar built to it, and these shut windowes made bay windowes and glazd, it would make the properest parlour in al the house: for (saith she) put your head out at this window, and looke what a sweet prospect belongs vnto it.

The Usurer mistrusting nothing, thrust out his craftie sconce, and the Gentlewoman shut to the windowe, and called her maids to helpe, where they bound and pinpond the caterpillers armes fast, and then stood he with his head into a backeyard, as if he had beene on a pillopy, and struggle he durst not for stifling himselfe. When she had him thus at the vantage, she got a couple of fixe penny naples and a hammer, and went into the yard, hauing her children attending vpon her, every one with a sharpe knife in thepp handes, and then coming to him with a sterne countenance, she looked as Medea did when she attempted reuenge against Iason. The Usurer seeing this tragedie, was afraid of his life, and cryed out, but in vaine, for her maydes made such a noyse, that his shriking could not be heard, whilist she naped one eare fast to the windowe, and the other to the stanchel, then began she to ble these words vnto him.

O thou vile and iniurious caterpillar, God hath sent thee to seeke thine owne reuenge, and now I and my children wil perfoyme it. For such thy wealth doth so countenance thee, that we cannot haue thee punished for thy coossenage, I my selfe wil bee Iustice, Iudge, and Executioner: for as the Pillopy belongs to such a villaine, so haue I naped thy eares and they shal be cut off to the perpetuall example of such purloining reprobates, and the executers shal bee these little infants, whose right without conscience or mercie thou so wrongfully detemest. Looke on this old Thurle hile babes, this is he that with his coossenage wil dyne you to beg and want in your age, and at this instant brings your Father to all this present miserie, haue no pteie vppon him, but you two cut off his eares, and thou (quoth she to the eldest) cut off his nose, and so be reuenged on the villaine whatsoeuer fortune me for my labour. At this the Usurer cryed out, and bad her stay her children, and hee would restore the house & land again to his husband. I cannot beleue thee base thurle q. she, for thou that would periure thy selfe

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against so honest a Gentleman as my husband, will not sticke to for-
swear thy selfe were thou at liberty and therefore I wil mangle
thee to the uttermost. As thus she was ready to haue her children
fal vp on him, one of hir maydes came running in, and told her, her
neighbors were come to supper: bid them come in, quoth she, and
behold this spectacle. Although the Usurer was passing loath to
haue his neighbors see him thus tyrannously vbled, yet in they came,
and when they saw him thus mannerly in a new made pillopy, and
his eares fast napled, some wondred, some laught, and all stood a-
mazed, till the Gentlewoman discoursed to them all the coosenage,
and how she meant to be reuenged: some of them perswaded her
to let him go, others were silent, and some bad him confesse: he hea-
ring them debate the matter, and not to offer to helpe him, cryed
out: why, and stand you staring on me neighbors, and wil not you
saue my life: No quoth the Gentlewoman, he or she that stirs to
helpe thee shal pay dearly for it, and therefore my boyes, off with
his eares: then he cryed out, but stay, and he would confesse all,
when from point to point he rehearsed how he had coossened his hus-
band by a deed of gift only made to him in trust, and there was con-
tent to giue him the two hundred marks freely for amends, and
to recle vp befoze any men of worship the land againe into his pos-
session, and vpon that he bad them all beare witnes. Then the gen-
tlewoman let loose his eares, and let slip his head, and away went
he home with his bloody lugges, and carryed not to take part of
the meat he had sent, but the gentlewoman & her neighbors made
merry therewith, and laught hartly at the vblage of the vsurer. The
next day it was bytten abroad, and came to the eares of the wor-
shipful of the country, who late in commission vpon it, and found
out the coossenage of the Usurer, so they praised the witt of the
Gentlewoman, restored her husband to the land, and the old churle
remained in discredit, and was a laughing stocke to all the country
all his life after.

I pray you what say you to Bounser the Miller with the gil-
den thumbe, whether thinke you him a Conny catcher or no: that
robbs euery poore man of his meale and cozne, and takes towle at
his owne pleasure, how many Conyes doth hee take vp in a yeare?
for when he byngs them wheat to the Mill, he sels them meale of
their

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their owne corne in the market. I omit Miles the Millers counsellage for wenching affaires, as no doubt in these causes they bee mighty Conny-catchers, and meane to speake of their pollicie in filching and stealing of meale. For you must note, that our iolly Miller doth not only verse vpon the poore and rich for their towle, but hath false hoppers conveyed vnder the sal of his Mill, where al the best of the meale runs by, this is, if the parrtie be by that bringerh the corne: but because many men haue many eyes, the Miller will driue them off for their griefe for a day or two, and then he playes his pranks at his owne pleasure. I need not tel that tale least of the Gentlemans Miller, that kept Court and Leet once euery weeke, and bled to set in euery sacke a candle, and so summon the owners to appeare by their names, if they came not, as they were farre enough from that place, then he amerced them, and so tooke treple towle of euery sacke. One night amongst the rest, the Gentleman his maister was vnder the Mill, and heard all his knauery, how euery one was called, and paid his amerciament, at last he heard his owne name called, and then stepping by the Ladder, he had stay, for he was there to make his appearance. I do imagine that the Miller was blanke, and perhaps his Maister called him knaue, but the more he is curst the better he fares, and the oftener the Miller is called theefe, the richer he waxeth: and therefore doe men rightly by a by word bid the Miller put out, and if he asketh what, they say a theeves head and a theeves paire of eares: for such graund Conny-catchers are these Millers, that he that cannot verse vpon a poore mans sacke, is said to be bozne with a golden thumbe. But that you may see more plainly they knauery, Ie tel you a pleasant tale, perfozmed not many yeares since by a Miller in Enfield Mill, ten miles from London, and an Alewiues boy of Edmondton, but because they are al at this present ahue, I wil conceale their names, but thus it fel out.

A pleasant Tale of a Miller and an Alewiues Boy
of Edmondton.

An Alewife of Edmondton, who had a great vent for spiced
Cakes, sent her sonne often to Endfield Mill for to haue her
wheat

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wheat ground, so that the Boy who was of a quick spirit & rype wit, grew very familiar both with the Miller and his man, and his man, and could get his corne sooner put in the Mill then any Boy in the country beside. It fortuned on a time, that this good wife wanting meale, bad her Boy hie to the Mill, and be at home that night without faile, for she had not a pint of flour in the house. Take her sonne, for so we will call his name, lapes his sacke on his mares backe, and away he rides singing towards Endfield: as he rode, he mette at the wailes with the Miller, and gaue him the time of the day, Godfather quoth he, whither ride you? to London Take quoth the Miller: Oh good Godfather quoth the boy, tell mee what Roze of griefe is at the Mill: marry great Roze quoth the Miller: but Take if thou wilt do me an errant to my man, he send thee by a token that thou shalt haue thy corn cast on a ground as soon as thou comest, He say and doe what you wil to be dispatched, for my mother hath neyther Cakes nor flour at home: then Take saith the Miller, bid my man grind thy corne next, by that token he looke to my Bitch and feed her wel. I wil Godfather saith the Boy, and rides his way, and maruelled with himself what Bitch it was that he had his man feede, considering for two or three yeares he had vsed to the Mill, and neuer saw a Dog nor Bitch, but a little pickeard Shauke that kept the Mill doore. Riding thus musing with himselfe, at last he came to Endfield, and there he had his corne wound up: as soon as he came by the stairs, the Millers man being somewhat sleepe began to aske Jack of what newes. Marry quoth the Boy, the newes is this, that I must haue my corne laide on next: sofe Take quoth the Millers man, your turne wil not come afore midnight, but ye are alwayes in hast, sofe fire makes sweet mault, your betters shal be serued afore you this time. Not so quoth the Boy, for I met my Godfather at the wailes riding to London, and tolde him what hast I had, and so he bids my griefe shal be layde on next, by that token you must looke to his Bitch and feed her wel. At that the Millers man smilde, and said he should be the next, and so rose up and turned a paim behind the Hopper. Take markt at this, and being a wily and a witty Boy, mused where this Bitch should be, and seeing none began to suspect some knauery, and therefore being very fami-

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familiar, was bold to looke about in euery corner, while the man was busie about the Hopper, at last Iacke turning vp a cloath that hung befoze the Trough, spied vnder the Hopper belowe, where a great Poake was tyed with a cord almost full of fine floure, that ranne at a false hole vnderneath, and could not be spied by any meanes. Iacke seeing this, beganne to suspect this was the Millers Bitch that hee commanded his man to feede, and so smiled and let it alone: at last when the corne was ground off that was in the Hopper, Iacke layde on his, and was very busie about it himselfe, so that the Millers man set him downe and tooke a nap, knowing the Boye could looke to the mill almost as well as himselfe, Iacke all this while had an eye to the Bitch, and determined at last to slip her hauler, which he warily performed, for when his corne was ground and he had put vp his meale, he whipt asunder the cord with his knife that belv the Poake, & thrust it into the mouth of his sacke, now there was in the Poake a bushell and more of passing fine floure, that the Millers Bitch had eaten that day, as soone as Iacke had tyed vp his sacke, there was striding who should laye on corne next, so that the Millers man wakke, and Iacke desiring one to helpe him vp with his corne, tooke his leaue and went his way, ryding merely homeward, smiling to thinke how he had consoned the Miller, as he roade, at that same place where hee mette the Miller outward he met him homeward, How now Iacke quoth the Miller hast ground, I, I thanke you Godfather quoth the Boy, but didst remember my errant to my man sayes he, didst bid him looke to my Bitch wel, Oh Godfather quoth the Boy, take no care for your Bitch she is wel, for I haue her here in my sacke whelpes and all, away rydes Iacke at this laughing, and the Miller grieuing, but when he found it true, I leaue you to gesse how hee and his man dealt together, but how the Alewife sported at the knauery of her sonne when he told her all the least, that imagine, but how soeuer for all that, Iack was euer welcome to the Mill and ground befoze any, and whose soeuer sacke fedde the Bitch, Iackes scapee euer towle-free, that hee might conceale the Millers subtiltie.

Was not this Miller a Conny-catcher maister R. G: What should I talke of the baser sort of men, whose occupation cannot bee upholden without craft, there is no myserie nor science almost, wherein a man may thriue, without it be linked to this famous Art of Conny-catching. The Alewife vales she nicke her Dyes and Conny-catch
her

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her guestes with stone Pottes and petty Canes, can hardly paye her Brewster, nay and yet that wil not serue, the chalke must walke to set by now & then a shilling or two too much, or else the rent wil not bee answered at the quarter day, besides ostry, faggots, and faire chambering, and pretty wenches that haue no wages, but what they get by making of beddes. I know some Taphouers about the Subber bes, where they buy a shoulder of mutton for two groats, and sel it to their ghest for two shillings, and yet haue no female friends to sup withall, let such take heed, least my fathers white Horse loose saddle & bridle & they go on foote to the diuel on pilgrimage. Tush maister R. G. God is my witnesse, I haue seene Chaunlers about London, haue two paire of scales, and when the searchers come, they shew them those that are sealed, but when their poore neighbors buy ware, they vse them that lack weighe, I condemne not all, but let such amend as are toucht at the quick. And is not this flat Conny-catching, yes, if it please your mastery & worship. Wh by the bale sort of Officers haue their shifts, & the crew of Whorriches Costermongers, can sell a simple man a crab for a pipping. And but that I haue leard wine wel, I wold touch both the Vintner and his bush, for they haue such brewing and tunning, such chopping and changing, such mingling & mixing, what of wine with water in the quart pot, and tempering one wine with another in the vessel, that it is hard to get a neate cup of wine and simple of it selfe, in most of our ordinary Taucrus, & do not they make poore men connies, that for their currant mony giue them counterfeite wine.

What say you to the Butcher with his prickes, that hath pollicies to pusse by his meate to please the eye, is not al his craft vled to draw the poore Conny to ryd him of his ware. Hath not the Draper his bathe shop to shadow the eye and wooll of his cloth, and all to make the country Gentleman or Farmer a conny. What trade can main-
taine his traffique? what science vphold it self? what man liue, vnles he growe into the nature of a Conny-catcher? Do not the Lawyers make long Pleases, stand vpon their denurres, and haue their quirkis and quiddities to make his poore Client a Conny? I speake not generally, for so they be the ministers of iustice, and the Patrons of the poore mens right, but particularly of such as hold gaires their God, and esteeme more of coyne then of conscience. I remember by the way a merry iest perfoymed by a Foole, yet wittily hit home at hazard, as blinde men shote the Crow.

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A pleasant Tale of Will Sommers.

King Henry the eight of famous memory, walking one day in his priuy Garden, with Will Sommers his Foole, it fortuned that two Lawyers had a suite vnto his maiestie for one piece of grounde that was almost out of lease and in the Kinges gift, and at time put vp their Supplication to his highnesse, and at that instant one of the Pantry that had been a long seruicure, had syped out the same land, and exhibited his petition for the same gift, so that in one houre, all the three Supplications were giuen to the King, which his highnesse noting, and being as then pleasantly disposed, he reuealed it to them that were by him, how there were three fishes at one bayce, and all gaped for a benefice, and hee stood in doubt on whome to bestowe it, and shewed them the Supplications, the Courtiers spoke for their felow, except two that were feed by the Lawyers, and they particularly pleaded for their friends, yelding many reasons to the King on both sides. At last his maiestie sayd, hee would referre the matter to Will Sommers, which of them his Foole thought most worthy of it should haue the lande. Will was glad of this, and loued him of the Pantrie wel, and resolved he should haue the ground, but the Foole brought it about with merry jest, Harry quoth he, what are these two Lawyers? I Will saide the King, then quoth the Foole, I wil vse them as they vse their pooze clients. Looke here quoth he, I haue a Walnut in my hand, and I wil diuide it among the three, so Will crackt it, and gaue to one Lawyer one shel, and to an other the other shel, and to him of the Pantry the meat, so shal thy gift be Harry, quoth he, this Lawyer shal haue good Bookes, and this faire promises, but my felow of the Pantry shal haue the land. For thus deale they with their clients, two men goe to two, and spende all that they haue vpon the Lawe, and at last, haue nothing but bare shales for their labour. At this, the King and his Noble men laughte: the Yeoman of the Pantry had the gift, and the Lawyers went home with fleas in their eares, by a Fooles verdit. I rehearse this Act to shew how men of Lawe, feede on pooze mens purses, and makes their country clients, oftentimes simple connyes. But leauing these common courses and trinal examples, I wil shew you maister R. G. of a kinde of Conny-catchers, that as yet passeth al these.

There bee in Englande, but especially about London, certayne quait, picke, and ucate companions, attyed in their apparel, eyther

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alla mode de Fraunce, with a fide Cloake, and a hat of a high blocke and a broad bymme, as if hee could with his head cosmographise the world in a moment, or else Ailespanyole, with a straight bombasse fleeue like a quail pipe, his short Cloake, and his Rapier hanging as if he were entering the List to a desperate Combate: his beard squared with such Art, eyther with his mustachies after the lash of Lions, standing as stiffe as if he wore a Ruler in his mouth, or else nikt off with the Italian cut, as if he ment to professe one faith with the upper lippe, and an other with his nether lippe, and then hee must be Porquissadon, with a fide peake pendent, eyther sharpe lyke the single of a Deere, or curtold lyke the broad ende of a Houle spade. This Gentleman forsooth, hanteth Tabling houses, Taverns, and such places, where yong nouices resorte, & can fit his humour to all companies, and openly shadoweth his disguise with the name of a Traveller, so that he wil haue a superficiall insight into certaine phrases of euerie language, and pronounce them in such a grace, as if almost hee were that Countryman bozne: then shal you heare him vaunt of his travels, and tel what wonders he hath seene in strange countries: how he hath bin at Saint Iames of Gompostella in Spaine, at Madril in the Kings Court: and then drawing out his blade, hee claps it on the boord, and and swears he bought that in Toledo: then wil he roue to Venice, and with a sigh, discover the situation of the citie, how it is seated two Leagues from Terra srenia, in the Sea, and speake of Rialto Treuiso and Murano, where they make Glasses: and to let the young Gentlemans see th an edge, he wil make a long tale of La Strado Courtizano, wher the beautiful Curtizans dwel. describing their excellency, and what angellical creatures they be and how amozously they wil entertaine strangers. Tush, he wil discourse the state of Barbary, and there to Eschnes and Alcaïres, and from thence leape to Fraunce, Denmarke, and Germany, After all concludng thus.

What is a Gentleman (saith he) without trauaile? euen as a man without one eye. The sight of sundry countries made Villes so famous: bought wite is the sweetest, and experience goeth beyond all Partrymonies. Doh young Gentlemen, as wel as I, know the pleasure & profit of trauel, they would not keep them at home within their natu continent: but visit the world, & win moze wisdom in traveling two or thye peeres, then all the wealth their Ancestors left them to possesse. Ah the sweet sight of ladies, the strange wonders in citles, and

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and the diuers manners of men and they conditions, were able to ra-
uish a yong Gentlemans senses with the surlet of content, and what
is a thousand pound spent to the obtaining of those pleasures.

All these Nouelties doth this piped Bragout boast on, when
his only trauaile hath been to look on a faire day, from Douer Clifts
to Callis, neuer hauing stept a foot out of England, but surueyed the
Maps, and heard others talke what they know by experience. Thus
decking himselfe like the Daw with the faire feathers of other birds,
and discoursing what he heard other men report, her gets so plausible
among yong Gentlemen, that he got his *Quinary* at the least, and
some gracious thanks for his labour. But happily some amongst ma-
ny, tickled with the desire to see strange countries, and wanting on by
his alluring words, would ioyne with him, and question if he meant
euer to trauaile againe. He straight after he hath bitten his peake by
the end, Alla Neopolitano begins thus to reply.

Sir, although a man of my traual and experience might be satisfi-
ed in the sight of countries, yet so insatiate is the desire of traualing,
that if perhaps a yong Gentleman of a liberal and courteous nature,
were desirous to see Ierusalem or Constantinople, would he wel
acquitt my paines and followe my counsaile, I would bestow a yeare
or two with him out of England. To be briefe, if the Gentleman
lumpe with him, then doth he cause him to sel some Lordship, and put
some thousand or two thousand pound in the banke to be receiued by
letters of exchange: and because the gentleman is ignorant, my yong
Paister his guide must haue the disposing of it: which he so wel sets
out, that the poore gentleman neuer sees any returne of his mony af-
ter. Then must some of suites of apparel be bought and furnisht every
way: at last, he names a ship wherein they should passe, and so downe
to Grauesend they go, and there he leaues the yong nouice, freed of
his money and woe begone, as farre from trauaile as Miles the mer-
ry Cobler of Shorditch, that swore he would neuer trauaile further,
than from his shop to the Alehouse. I pray you call you not these fine
witted fellows Conny-catchers Paister R. G.?

But now Sir by your leave a little, what if I should proue you a
Conny-catcher Paister R. G. would it not make you bluish at the
matter? He goes as neare to it as the Fryer did to his Hostesse mayde,
when the Clarke of the parish tooke him at Leuaten at midnight.
Like the Queens Maayers, if you sold them not Orlando Furioso

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for twenty Nobles, and when they were in the country, sold the same play to the Lord Admirals men for as much more. Was not this plaine Conny-catching Painter R.G?

But I heare when this was objected, that you made this excuse: that there was no more faith to be held with Players, than with them that valued such at the price of a feather: for as they were Comedians to act, so the actions of their lives were Cameleon like, that they were uncertaine, variable, time pleasers, men that measured honestie by profits, and that regarded their Authors not by desert, but by necessity of time. If this may serue you for a Shabow, let mee ble it for an excuse of our Caru Conny-catching: for when we meet a country Farmer with a full purse, a miserable misce, that eyther racks his Tenants rents, or selles his graine in the market at an unreasonable rate: we hold it a deuotion to make him a Conny, in that he is a Caterpillar to others, and gets that by pilling and polling of the poore, that we strip him of by sleight and agilitie of wit.

Is there not heere resident about London, a crew of terrible Hacksters in the habite of Gentlemen, wel appareld, and yet some weare bootes for want of stockings, with a Locke woyme at theyr lefte eare for their mistrisse fauour, his Rapper Alla reuolto, his Rapynado pendent ready for the stab, and cauleuarst like a warlike Magnifico: yet for all this outward shew of pride, inwardly they be humble in minde, and despise w:rloly welch, for you shal neuer take them with a penny in theyr purse. These Souldados, for vnder that profession most of them wander, haue a pollicie to scourge Alehouses, for where they light in, they neuer leape out, till they haue shrowed theyr Arithmatike with chalker on euery post in the house, figured in Cyphers like round Os, till they make the goodman cry O, O, O, as if hee should cal an Oyes at Six: or Se:llions. Now sir, they haue sundry whises to maintaine them in this verling, for eyther they creep in with the goodwife, and so vndo the goodman, or els they beare it out with great bags if the Host be simple, or els they trip him in some wordes when he is tipsy, that he hath spoken against some Justice of peace or other, or some other great man: and then they hold him at a bay with that, til his bricke almost breake. Thus shift they from house to house, hauing this prouerbe amongst them: Such must eate as are hungry and they must pay that haue money. Call you not these Conny-catchers Painter R.G?

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It were an endlesse peece of work, to discover the abhominable life of brokers, whose shops are the very temples of the devil, themselves his priests, and their books of account more damnable, than the Alcoran set out by Mahomet: for as they induce young gentlemen to pawn their lands, as I said before: so they are ready (the more is the pity that it is suffered) to receive any goods, howsoever it bee come by, having their shoppes, (as they say) a lawful market to buy and sell in, so that whence grows so many streets about London, but in that they haue Brokers their friends, to buy whatsoeuer they purloine & steal: And yet is the Dicklocke, Life, or Hooker, that brings & storne goods, made a fine Conny, and used as an Instrument onely of the villany: for suppose he hath listed a good one in a cloake, or so many parcels as are worth tenne pounds, and venders his life in hazard for the obtaining of it: the miserable Caterpillar the Broker will thinke hee dealeth liberally with him if he giue him forty shillings, so doth he not onely maintaine felony, but like a theefe he doles the theefe. And are not these ground Conny-catchers Master R. G.?

I knew not farre from Fleetstree a Haberdasher, it were a good deed to take Paine to tel his name, that took of a boy of seven yeere old a Rapier worth forty shillings, and a sticht cassata hat worth ten, and all for five shillings the Gentleman, father to the child, was sicke when necessity bound him thus nigh, to lay his weapon and his Bonnet to pawn, and as soon as he recovered, which was within six weeks after, sent the money and twelue pence for the loan, to haue the parcels againe. But this Cuthbertes answer was, the Boy had made him a bill of sale of his hand for a moneth, and the day was broken, and he had made the best of the Rapier and hat. Was not this a Jewe and a notable Conny-catcher Master R. G.

Paine.

A boy of
vii. yeares
old to
make a bill
of sale.

It had bene wel if you had rould out your Rhetorike against such a rakehell. But come to the honest kinde of life, and you shal see how they stand vpon circumstances: if you borrow but two shillings, there must be a groat for the money, and a groat for the Bil of sale, and this must bee renewed every moneth: so that they resemble the Bore he dice, which being wel payd all night, will in the morning be the greatest winner.

Tell not a merry tale to haue about againe Master R. G. with your poetical Brethren: amongst the which, one learned Hypocrite, that could brooke no abuses in the Commonwealch, was so zealous,

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that he began to put an English the Same in the Legend, for the holiness of her life : and forgot not so much as her dogge, as Tobies was remembred, that wagged his tayle at the sight of his olde Mistresse. This pure Partinist (if he were not worse) had a combat betwene the flesh and the spirite, that he must needs haue a Wife, which he cunningly conny-catcht in this manner.

A pleasant Tale how a holy brother Conny-catcht for a Wife.

First you must vnderstand, that he was a kind of Scholastical puppyon, nourst by onely at Grammer schoole, least going to the vniuersitie, through his nimble witte, too much learning should make him mad. So he had past As in presenti, and was gone a proficient as farre as Carmen Heroicum : for he pronounst his wordes like a bragout, and helde vp his head like a Pale-horse, and could talke against Bishops, and with very mannerly the discipline of the Primitive Church were resloped. Now fir, this Gentleman had espyed (I dare not say about Fleetstreet) a proper mayd, who had giuen hir by the decease of her father foure hundred pound in money, besides certaine faire houses in the Citie : to chis gyle goeth this proper Greek a wooing, naming himselfe to be a Gentleman of Cheshire, and only sonne and heire to his father, who was a man of great reueneues : and to make the matter moze plausible, he had attyed his owne brother very orderly in a blew coat, and made him his seruicingman, who, though he were eldest, yet to aduance his yonger brother to so good a marriage, was content to lie, cog, and flatter, and to take any seruile paines, to sooth vp the matter : insomuch that when her father in law (for his mother was married againe, to an honest, vertuous, and substantial man in Fleetstreet or thereabouts) heard how this yong Gentleman was a Quiter to his daughter in law, careful he shoulde doe wel, calde the Seruicingman aside, which by his outward behaviour seemed to be an honest and discreet man, and began to question with him what his Master was, of what parentage, of what possibilitie of living after his fathers decease, and how many children he had beside him.

This fellow wel instructed by his holy Brother, without distrust to the man, simply as he thought, said, that he was the sonne and heire
of

Conny-catching.

of one Maister G. dwelling in Cheshire, at the Manor of &c. and that he had a yonger brother, but this was heere to all, and rehearsed a proper living of some five hundred markes a yeare. The honest man, knowing diuers Cheshire Gentlemen of that name, gaue credyte to the fellowe, and made no further inquiry, but gaue countenance to my yong Maister, who by his flattering speeches had wonne, not onely the Maisters fauour vnto the full, but also the good wil of her Mother. So that the match shortly was made by, and married they shoulde bee forsooth, and then shoulde she, her Father and her Mother, ryde home to his Father in Cheshire, to haue sufficient dowry appointed.

To bee brieffe, wedded they were, and bedded they had been thre or foure nightes, and yet for all this saye shew the Father was a little tealous, and smoakt him, but durst say nothing. But at last, after the marriage had bene past ouer thre or foure dayes, it chanced that her Father and this Seruingman went abroad, and past through S. Pauls Churchyard amongst the Stationers, a Prentise amongst the rest, that was a Cheshire man, and knew this counterfayte Seruingman and his brother, as being bozne in the same Parish where his Father dwelt, called to him, and sayde: What I. how doth your Brother P. how doth your Father, liues he still? The fellowe answered him all were wel, and loth his brothers wiues father shoulde heare any thing, made no stay but departed.

This acquaintaunce naming the fellowe by his name and asking for his brother, droue the honest Citizen into a great maze, and doubted he, his wife & his daughter were made Connyes. Well, he smooched all up, as if he had heard nothing, and let it passe till he had sent the man about necessary businesse, and then secretly returned againe vnto the Stationers shop, and began to question with the Boy, if he knew the Seruingman wel, that he cald to him of late. I marry doe I sir quoth he. I know both him and his brother P. I can tel you they haue an honest poore man to their father, and though now in his olde age he bee scarce able to go farre without the helpe of the Parish, yet he is wel beloued of all his neighbours. The man hearing this, although it greeued him that he was thus misled by a pallyard, yet seeing no meanes to amend it, he thought to reed him selfe unpleasantly, & therfore had diuers of his friends and neighbours to a Supper: Well, they bene at the time appointed, & come come. all welcome. what must sit

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at the boordes end but my poong Maister, and he very coply, hadde them all welcome to his fathers house, they all gaue him reuerent thanks, esteeming him to be a man of worship and worth. As soone as all were set, and the meate serued m, and the Gentlemans Scriving-man stood mannerly wayting on his brothers trencher, at last the good man of the house smiling said: Sonne P. I pray you let your man sit downe, and eate such part with vs as God hath sent vs. Harry quoth Maister P. that were wel to make my man my companion, he is wel enough, let him suppe with his fellowes. Why sir sayth he, in sayth be plaine, cal him brother, and bid him sitte downe. Come coossen I. quoth he, make not strange, I am sure your brother P. wil giue you leaue. At this Maister P. blusht, and askt his Father in lawe what he meant by those wordes: and whether he thought his man his brother or no? I by my faith doe I sonne quoth he, and account thes no honest man that wilt deny thine owne brother and thy father: For sir know I haue leard your pettegree. Alas daughter quoth he, you are wel marryed, for his Father knces of the almes of the Parish, and this poore fellowe which he hath made his slaue, is his eldest Brother. At this his wife began to weepe, all was dash, and what she thought God knowes. Her mother cryed out, but all was bootlesse, Maister P. confest the truce, and his brother sat downe at supper, and for al that he had the wench. I pray you was not this a Conny-catcher Maister R. G.?

But now to be a little pleasant with you, let me haue your opinion what you deeme of those Amorosos here in England, & about London, that (because the old prouerbe saith, change of pasture makes fat calves, wil haue in euery shire in England a sundry wife, as for an instance your countryman R. B. are not they right Conny-catchers? enter into the nature of them, and see whether your pen had been better imployed in discovering their bill: inies, thā a simple ledgerdmain at cards. For suppose a man hath but one daughter, and hath no other dowrie but her beautie and honestie, what a spoile is it for hir to lye in the hands of such an adulterous and incontinuous rascal? had not hir father beene better to haue lost forty Shillings at cards, then to haue his daughter so connycatcht and spoyld for euer after? These youths are proper fellows, neuer without good apparel and store of crowns, wel hoyst, and of so quaint & fine behauior, & so eloquent, that they are able to induce a yong girle to folly, especially since they shadow they:

Conny catching

villainy with the honest pretence of marriage: for thep custome is this. When they come into the Citie or other place of credit, or sometime in a country village, as the fortune of thep villany leads them, they make inquiry what good marriages are abroad, & on the Sunday make suruey what faire and beautiful mayds or widowes are in the Parish: then as thei licentious lust leades them, whether the eye for fauour, or the eare for riches, so they set downe thep rest, & sojourne epther there or thereabouts, hauing money at wil, and their companions to sooth vp whatsoever damnable thep shal protest, courting the maid or widow with such faire words, & swete promises, that shee is often so set on fire, that neither the report of others, nor the admonition of their friends, can draw them from the loue of the Poligamoi or bel-swallowers of the country. And when the wretches haue by the space of a moneth or two satisfied their lust, they waxe weary, & either faime some great iourney for a while to be absent, & so go & visite some other of his wines, or els if he meane to giue her the bagge, he selleth whatsoever he can, and so leaues hir spoild both of hir wealth and honestie. then which there is nothing more precious to an honest woman. And because you shal see an instance, I wil tel you a pleasant tale per- formed by our villaines in Wiltshire not long since, I wil conceale the parties names, because I thinke the woman is yet aliue.

A pleasant Taie of a man that was married to sixteene Wiues,
and how courteously his last wife intreated him.

IN Wiltshire there dwelt a Farmer of indifferent wealth, that had but onely one childe, and that was a daughter, a mayd of excellent beauty and good behauior, and so honest in hir conuersation, that the good report of hir vertues was wel spoken of in all the country, so that what for hir good qualities, & sufficient dowry that was like to fal to her, she had many suiters, mens sons of good welch and honest conuersation. But whether this mayd had no munde to wed, or she like none that made loue to her, or she was afrayde to match in haste lest shee might repent at leysure, I know not: but she refused all, & kept her still a virgin. But as we see oftentimes, the coyest maydes happen on the coldest mariages, playing like the beetle that makes scoone al day of the daintiest flowers, and at night takes vp his lodging in a cowsherd. So this maid, whom we wil cal Marian, refused many honest

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and wealthy Farmers sonnes, and at last lighted on a match, that for
euer after made her market: for it fel out thus. One of these notable
rogues, by occupation a taploz, and a fine workman, a reprobate giuen
ouer to the spoyle of honest maides, & to the deflowring of virgins, hea-
ring as he trauelled abroad of this Marian, did meane to haue a sling
at her, and therefore came into the towne where his father dwelt and
asked worke. A very honest man of that trade, seeing him a passing
proper man, and of a very good and honest countenance, and not sim-
ply apparelled, sayd he would make trial of him for a garment or two,
and so tooke him into seruice: as soone as hee saw him vse his needle,
he wondered not onely at his workmanship, but at the swiftness of
his hand. At last the fellow (whom we wil name William) desired his
Maister that he might vse his sheeres but once for the cutting out of
a dublet, which his Maister graunted, and he vfed so excellently wel,
that although his Maister was counted the best taploz in Wiltshire,
yet he found himself a botcher in respect of his new intertaineed tour-
neyman, so that from that time forward he was made forzman of the
shop, & so pleased the gentlemen of that shire, that who but William
talkt on for a good taploz in that shire. Well, as yong men and maydes
meet on sondayes & holydaies, so this taploz was passing braue, & be-
gan to frolike it amongst the maydes, & to be very liberal, being full of
silver and gold, & for his personage a properer man than any was in
all the Parish, and made a far off a kind of loue to this Marian, who
seeing this William to be a very handsome man, began somewhat to
affect him, so that in short tyme she thought wel of his fauors, & there
grew some loue betweene them, insomuch that it came to his fathers
eares, who began to schoule his daughter for such foolish affectio-
wards one she knew not what he was, nor whether he would: but in
vaine, Marian could not but thinke wel of him, so that her father ene-
dily sent for his Maister, and began to question of the disposition of his
man. The Maister told the Farmer friendly that what he was hee
knew not, as being a mere stranger vnto him: but for his workman-
ship, he was one of the most excellent both for needle and sheeres in
England: for his behauior since he came into his house, he had behaued
himself very honestly and curteously: wel apparell'd he was, and well
mounted, & might for his good qualities seeme to be a good womans
fellow. Although this somewhat satisfied the father, yet he was loth a
taploz should carry away his daughter, & that she should be bound to live

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of a bare occupation, whereas he might haue lured men to her husbandes, so that hee and her friends called her a whore, and perswaded her from him, but she flakely told them she neuer loved any but him, and sith it was her first love, she would not now be turned from it, whatsoeuer hap did afterward befall vnto her. Her father that loved her dearly, seeing no perswasions could draw her from the taylor, left her to her owne libertie, and so shee and William agreed together, that in short time they were married, and had a good portion, and set by shop, and liued together by the space of a quarter of a yeare very orderly. At last satisfied with the lust of his new wife, he thought it good to visit some other of his wiues (for at that instant hee had sixteene aliue) and made a scuse to his wife and his wiues father to go into Dorsetshire (which was his natieue country) and visit his friends, and craue somewhat of his father towards household. Although his wife was loth to part from her sweet Wil. yet she must be content, and so welhooll and prouided, away hee rydes for a moneth or two, that was his furthest day, and downe goes he into some other country to solace himself with some other of his wiues. In this meane while one of his wiues that he married in or about Canton in Somersetshire, had learned of his villany, and how many wiues he had, and by long traueyle had got a note of their names and dwelling, and the hands and seales of euerie parish where he was married, and now by fortune shee heard that hee had married a wife in Wiltshire, not farre from Salisbury: thither hies shee with warrants from the Bishop and diuers Iustices to apprehend him, and comming to the Towne where he dwelt, bere subtilly inquired at her host of his estate, who told her that he had married a rich Farmers daughter, but now was gone downe to his friends in Dorsetshire, and would be at home againe within a weeke, for hee had been eight weekes already from home. The woman inquired no further for that time, but the next morning went home to the Farmers house, and desired him to sende for his daughter, for shee would speake with her from her husband: the man straight did so, and shee hearing she should haue newes from her William, came very hastily. Then the woman said, shee was sorry for her, in that their misfortunes were alike, in being married to such a runnagate as this Taylor: for (quoth shee) it is not yet a yeare and a halfe since hee was married to me in Somersetshire. As this went colde to the olde mans heart, so itroke it deadly into the mind of Marian, who desiring her to tell the

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truth, he out with her testimony, and shewed them how he had at that instant Greene wiues alive. When they read the certificate, and sawe the hands and seales of every parish, the old man fel a weeping: but such was the griefe of Marian, that her sorrow stopt her teares, and she sat as a woman in a trance, til at last fetching a great sigh, she called God to witnes she would be reuenged on him for al his wiues, and would make him a general example of al such gracelesse rumpagates. So she concealed the matter, and placed this her fellow in misfortune in a kin swomans house of hers, so secretly as might be, attending the coming of hir trecherous husband, who returned within a fortnight, hauing in the space hee was absent visited three or foure of his wiues, and now ment to make a short cut of the matter, & fel al that his new wife had, and to trauel into some other shire, for hee had heard how his Somersetshire wife had made inquiry after him in diuers places. Being come home he was wonderfully welcome to Marian, who entertained him with such curtesies as a kind wife could any waies afford him, only the vse of her body she denied, saying her natural disease was vpon her. Well to be bried, a great supper was made, and al her friends was bidden, & he euery way so welcome as if it had bin the day of his brial, yea al things was smoothed by so cunningly, & he suspected nothing lesse then the reuenge intended against him. As soone as supper was ended, & al had taken their leaue, our taplor would to bed, and his wife with her own hands helpt to vndresse him very louingly, and being laid down she kist him, & said she would go to hir fathers & come again straight, bidding him tal a sleep the whilest: her husband with trauel & drinking at supper, had no need of great meate, for he straight fel into a sound slumber, the whilest she had sent for his other wife, & other her neighbors disguised, & coming softly into the parlour where he lay, she turnd by his clothes at his feet, & tyed his legs fast togither with a rope, then waking him, she asked him what reason he had to sleep so soundly. He new wakke out his sleep began to stretch himselfe, and gald his legs with the cord, whereat he wondering sayd: How now wife? whats that hurts my legs? what are my feet bound togither? Marian looking on him with lookes full of death, made him this answer: A villaine, thy legs are bound, but hadst thou thy iust desert, thy necke had long since been stretcht at the gallowes, but before thou and I part, I wil make thee a iust spectacle vnto the world, for thy abhominable trecherie: and with that she clapt her hand fast on the

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haire of his head, and held him down to the pillow. William driuen in to a wondrous amaze at these words, said trembling: Sweete wife, what sonah, alteration is this? what meane these words wife? Tray-
 102 (q. mee) I am none of thy wife, neither is this thy wife. & with that she brought her forth that he was married in Somersetsshire, although thou art married to her as well as to me, and hast like a villaine sought the spoile of fifteene women beside my selfe, & that thou shalt heare by iust certificat, & with y there was read the bedrol of his wiues, where hee married them, and where they dwelt. At this hee lay mute as in a traunce, & only for answer held by his hands, and desired them both to be merciful vnto him, for he confest al was truth, that he had bin a ha-
 nous offender, and deserued death. Thus saith Marian, but how canst thou make any one of vs amends? If a man kil the father, he may sa-
 tisfie the blood in the sonne: if a man steale, he may make restitution: but he that robs a woman of her honesty & virginitie, can neuer make any satisfaction: and therefore for al the red I wil be reuenged. Which that his other wife and the women clapt both on him, & held him fast, while Marian with a sharpe rator cutt off his thoes, and made him a gelding. I thinke thee had litle respect where the signe was, or obser-
 ued litle art for the string, but off they went, & then she cast them in his face, & said, Now lustful whozemaster, go & deuise other women as thou hast done vs, if thou canst, so they sent in a surgion to him y they had prouided, & away they went. The man lyng in great paine of bo-
 dy, & agony of mind, the surgion looking to his wound, had much ado to stanch the blood, & alwaies he laught hartily when hee thought on the reuenge, and had a vengeance on such sow-gelders as made such large slits: but at last he laid a blood-plaister to him, & stopt his bleed-
 ing, and to be brieft in time heald him, but with much paine. As soone as he was whole, and might go abroad without danger, he was com-
 mitted to the gaole, and after some other punishment, banished out of Wilshire and Somersetsshire for euer after. Thus was this lustie cocke of the game made a capon, and as I heard, had litle lust to mar-
 ry any moze wiues to his dying day.

How like you of this conny-catching N. R. G? But because now we haue entred talke of Caylozs, let mee haue about with them, for they bee mightie Conny-catchers in sundry kindes. I pray you what Doct hath so many fictions, what Painter so many fancies, as a Cay-
 102 loz hath fashions, to shew the varietie of his art: changing every week

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the shape of his apparel into new forms, or els he is counted a meer e
botcher. The venetian and the gallogascaine is stale, and crumke floy
out of vse, the rounde hose bumbasted close to the breech, and rust a-
boue the necke with a curle, is now common to euery cullion in the
country, & doublets be they neuer so quainely quilted, yet forsooth the
swaige at plough must haue his belly as stee as the courtier, that bee
may pisse out at a button hole at the least. And al these strange deuises
doth the Taylor inuent to make poore gentlemen conies: for if they
were tyed to one fashion, then stil might they know how much beluet
to send to the Taylor, and then would his sitching abate. But to pre-
uent them, if he haue a french belly, he will haue a Spanish skirt, and
an Italian wing, seamed and quartered at the elbows, as if he were a
souldado readye to put on an armour of ppoole to fight in Spile-ende
vnder the bloody ensigne of the Duke of Shoyntech. Thus wil the
fantasticke Taylor make poore gentlemen Conies, & euer alke more
beluet by a yarde and a halfe then the doublet in conscience requires.
But herein lies the lead part of their cony-catching: for those graund
Taylors that haue al the right properties of the mysterie, which is to
be knauid, cheerish, and proude, take this course with courtiers and
courtly gentlemen, they flate outside, inside, lace, drawing out, and
making, and then set downe their parcels in a bill, which they so ouer-
pryse, that some of them with very pycking vp of doublets, haue fleck
pong gentlemen of whole Lordships, & cal you not this cony-catching
M. R. G? To vse the figure Pleonasmos, *Hisco oculis*, with these eyes
I haue seene Taylors prentises sel as much vales in a weeke in cloth
of golde, beluet, latten, taffata, and lace, as hath beene woorth thirle
shillinges, and these eares hath heard them scoyne when their vales
came but to ten shillinges, and yet there were foure prentises in the
shop. If the prentises could lurch so mightily, then what did the mai-
ster? But you must imagine this was a womans taylor, that could in
a gowne put seuentene yards of ell broad taffata, bles be the French
fleues & breech berdingales, that grants them liberty to connycate
so mightily. But this I talke of our London and courtly Taylors,
but euen the poore pycklouse the country taylor, that hath scarce any
more wealth then his chimble, his needle, his pressing yron, and hi
sheers, wil sitch as wel as the proudest of that trade in England, they
wil to snip and snap, that al the reuer sion goes into hel. Now sir, this
hel is a place that the taylors haue vnder their shopboord, wher al their

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Some shreds is thrust, and I pray you cal you not this pilling & pol-
ling, and flat Camp-catching. Daffler R. G: But because you may
see whether I speake truth or no, Ile tel you a merry iest of a Taylor
in Yorke not farre from Petergate, done about fourteene yeare ago,
and thus it fel out.

A pleasant Tale of a Taylor, how he conny-catcht a Gen-
tlewoman, and was made himselfe a Gonny at-
terwardes by his man.

In Yorke shire there dwelt a womans Taylor famous for his Art,
but noted for his fitching, which although hee was light fingered, yet
for the excellency of his workmanship hee was much sought too, and
kept more Iournemen, then any shue in that citie did: and albeit hee
would haue his share of velvet, satten, or cloth of golde, yet they must
find no fault with him, least he half spoyle their garment in making.
Besides, he was passing proud, and had as haughtie a looke, as if his
father had with the diuel looke ouer Lyncolne: his ordinary dublets
were Cassat: cut in the summer vpon a wrought shirt, and his cloake
faced with velvet, his stockings of the purest granado like, with a
French painted hose of the richest billiment lace, a beauer hatte turst
with velvet, so quaintly as if he had ben some Espagnolo trickt vp to
goe court some quaint curtesie, insomuch that a plaine seruingman
once meeting him in this attire, going through Wamgat to take aire
in the field, thought him at the least some Esquire, and of wish hee had
and gaue his worship the time of the day, thus clawed this Glorioso
by the elbow, so that if a Tauerne had been by, a pottle of wine should
haue been the least reward for a largesse to the simple seruing man:
but this bowical huffe sauffe, not content to passe away with one wor-
ship, began to hold the fellow in place, and to question whose man hee
was. The fellow curteously making a low cringe saide, may it please
your worship, I serue such a Gentleman dwelling in such a place, as
thus he answered him, he spied in the gentlemans bolome a neede and
a threed, wherenpon the fellow simply sayd to him, As your worships
man in looking this morning to your doublet, hath left a neede and a
threed on your worships brest, you had best take it off, least some
thinke your worship to bee a Taylor. The Taylor not thinking
the fellow had spoken simply, but frumpet him, made this reply: what
sawco

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satyr huanne doest thou mocke mee: what if I bee a taylour, what
 that to thee, wert not for shame I would lende thee a boxe on the eare
 or two, the fellow being plaine, but peeuish and an olde knaue, gathe-
 ring by his owne words that he was a taylour sayd, spe so God helpe
 me I mocke you not, but are you a taylour. I marry am I quoth he,
 why then sayes the scruping man, all my cappes, knees, and worships,
 I did to thy apparrel, and therefore maister thanke mee, for it was
 agaynst my will, but now I knowe thee farwel good honest pycke-
 louse, and looke not behynde you, for if you doo, the swinge you in
 my scabbard of my sword til I can stand ouer thee, away went Mon-
 sieur Magnifico stowning, and the scruping man went into the Citie
 laughing, but all this is but to describe the nature of the man, now to
 the secrets of his Art, all the Gentlewomen of the Countrey cryde
 out vpon him, yet could they not part from him, because he so quaint-
 ly fitted their humors, at last it so fel out, that a Gentlewoman not
 farre from Feroy Briggess, had a taffata gowne to make, and hee
 would haue no lesse at those dayes then chruen els of elyroad taffata,
 so shee bought so much and ready to send it, shee sayd to her husband
 in hearing of al her scruping man, what a spight is this, seeing that I
 must send alwayes to yonder knaue taylor two yards more then is ne-
 cessary, but how can we amend vs, all the rest are but botchers in re-
 spect of him, and yet nothing grieues mee but we can neuer take him
 with it, & yet I and mine haue stood by while hee hath cut my gowne
 out, a pleasant fellowe that was new come to serue her husband, one
 that was his Clarke and a perty scholer, answered good mistris giue
 me leaue to carry your taffata and see it cut out, and if I spy not out
 his knauery laugh at me when I come home, marry I prythe do q. his
 W. and mistris, but what for euer thou seest say nothing leaue he be angry
 and spolie my gown, let me alone mistris q. he, and so away he goes to
 Work, & coming to this taylor found him in his shop, & deliuered him
 the taffata with this message, that his mistris had charged him to see it
 cut out, not that he suspected him, but that he would let it ly long by him
 and take other worke in hand, that taylor scornfully sayd he should, & al-
 ked him if he had any spectacles about him, no q. the fellow my sight is
 yooing inough I need no glasses, if you do put them quoth he, and see
 if you can see me steale a yard of taffata out of your mistresses gowne,
 and so taking his sheeres in hand he cut it out so nimble that hee cut
 three for parts to the gown, and four fife pieces, that by computation
the

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the fellow gets he had stolne two els & a half, but say nothing he durst. As soone as he had done, there came in more gentlemens men with worke, that the taylor was very busie & regarded not, the serving-man who seeing the taylor's cloke lying lose, lifted it away & caried it home with him to his mistris house, where he discoursed to his maister & his mistris what he had seen, & how he had stole the taylor's cloake, not to that intent to fitch, but to try an experiment vpon him, for maister q. he, when he brings home my mistris gown, he wil complain of the losse of his cloake, & then see, doe you but tel him that I am experienced in Magike, & can cast a figure, and wil tel him where his cloke is without faile, say but this sir, and let me alone: they agreed, & resolved to try the wit of their pong man. But leauing him, againe to our taylor: who when he had dispatcht his customers, was ready to walke with one of them to the tauerne, & then mist his cloke, searcht al about, but find it he could not, neither knew he wol d to suspect: so with much grieft he past it ouer, & when he had ended the gentlewomans gown (because she was a good customer of his) he himself tooke his nag & rid home withal: welcome he was to the gentlewoman and hir husband, and the gown was passing fit, so that it could not be amended, insomuch that the gentlewoman praised it, and highly thankd him. Oh mistris (quoth he) though it is a good gown to you, tis an infortunate gowne to me, for that day your man brought the cassata, I had a cloke stoln that stood me but one fortnight before in foure pound, and neuer since could I heare any word of it. Truly said the Gentleman, I am passing sorry for your losse, but that same man that was at your house is passing skilful in Negromancy, and if any man in England can tel you where your cloke is, my man can: marry q. he, and I wil giue him a brace of angels for his labour: so the fellow was cald and talkt with all, and at his mistris request was content to do it, but he would haue his twenty shillings in hand, and promised if he told him not where it was, who had it, and caused it to be deliuered to him again, for his two angels he would giue him ten pounds: vpon this the taylor willingly gaue him the money, and vp went he into a closet like a learned clark, and there was thre or foure houres laughing at the taylor, he thinking he had bin al this while at Cautake. At last downe comes the fellow with a figure drawn in a paper in his hand, & smiling cald for a bible, and told the taylor he would tel him who had his cloke, where it was, & helpe him to it againe, so that he would be swozne on a bible to

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answer to all questions that he demanded of him faithfully: the taylor granted and swope on a bible, then hee demanded al should go out but his maister, his mistres, the taylor and himself. Then he began thus: wel, you haue taken your oth on the holy bible, tel me q. he, did you not cut thre fozeparts foz my mistris gowne? At this the taylor blusht, & began to be in a chafe, and would haue flung out of the doore, but the seruingman said, nay neuer start man, foz before thou goest out of this parlour, if thou deniest it, I wil bring the cassara thou stolest into this place, wrape in thine own cloake: & therfoze answer directly to my question, leaue to your discredit I shew you the trick of a scholler: the taylor halfe afraid, said he did so indeed: and q. he, did you not cut foure stoe peeces wher you haue cut but two? yes al is true q. the taylor, why then as true it is, that to deceiue the deceiuer is no deceit: foz as truly as you stole my mistris cassara, so truly did I steale your cloake, and here it is. At this the taylor was amazed, the gentleman and his wife laught hartly, & so al was turned to a merriment. the taylor had his cloake again, the gentlewoman hir cassara, and the seruingman twenty shillings, was not this ptey and wtey Conny-catching? P. R. G.

Thus haue I proued to you, myships, how there is no estate, trade, occupation, noz mystery, but it is by Conny-catching, and that our shift at cards compared to the rest, is the simplest of al, & yet fozsooth, you could bestow the pates to write two whole pamphlets against vs poore cony-catchers: think P. R. G. it shal not be put by except you graunt vs our request. It is informed vs that you are in hand with a booke named The repentance of a Conny-catcher, with a discovery of secret villanies, wherein you meane to discourse at full the nature of the stripping Law, which is the abuse offered by the keepers of Newgate to poore prisoners, and some that belong to the Marthallsea. If you doe so, ye shal do not onely a charitable, but a meritorious deed: foz the occasion of most mischief, of greatest mipping and foyling, and of al vilanies, comes through the extorting bribery of some cooffering and counterfeit keepers and companions, that carry unlawful warrants about them to take vp men. Will your worship therfoze stand to your worde, and set out the discovery of that, al wee of Whittington Colledge wil rest your beadien. Otherwise looke that I wil haue the crew of Cony-catchers sweate themselves your professed enemies foz ever. Farewel.

Cuthbert Conny-catcher.

FINIS.

